



# Albany air tests show TCE traces

DEQ official says there's nothing alarming in the 12 samples

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A dozen air samples taken in Albany in the last few days with ultrasensitive instruments have all come back with tiny traces of TCE, an industrial solvent, according to a state environmental official.

The official, Geoff Brown of the state Department of Environmental Quality, was not alarmed by the findings.

He interpreted them to indicate that TCE is present in very small amounts in the ambient air, or that it comes from material used in buildings.

The readings were taken in the continuing assessment of TCE pollution in groundwater below the surface of the Albany Research Center.

Brown provided an update Friday. The DEQ is overseeing the sampling on behalf of the research center.

Brown said 12 air samples taken around Albany — inside Liberty Elementary School, West Albany High School, the public library and elsewhere — all came back with minute traces of TCE, an industrial solvent that is also said to be a probable cancer agent.

He said he believes that's the result of either the ambi-

ent air or of products in use in almost all buildings.

The findings, he said, "re-assured me a little bit." They meant that Liberty School was not unique. Sampling last week had found TCE in the air there.

The latest readings came back in the range of 0.01 to 0.6 micrograms of TCE per cubic meter of air. The DEQ considers 0.028 a safe level.

The DEQ issued a press statement Wednesday saying the readings at Liberty presented no immediate threat to students or staff. It said a second meeting for school people and the neighborhood would be scheduled in about a month. The first was Monday and drew nearly 30 people.

The testing began in March after the research center discovered TCE contamination in groundwater. The center blames leakage from TCE stored at the center years ago. The material is no longer used.

Testing will continue, Brown said.

The next goal is to see how far the plume of groundwater contamination extends. This may take a month or several weeks.

Then comes the next stage: figuring out how to clean the groundwater.

The Albany Research Center has posted information on the TCE investigation on its Web site, [www.alrc.doe.us](http://www.alrc.doe.us).